Welcome to the

Weavers Underground

Chapter 1: OVERWHELMED? HERE'S HOW TO COPE

These are really difficult times. I've heard the multiple frontal assaults on our democracy likened to the velociraptors in *Jurassic Park* testing for weaknesses in the fences. The attacks are coming from all sides. It's terrifying. It's overwhelming. So...what can you do?

Suggestion 1: Be focused and selective.

Don't fixate on Trump's every antic and utterance. As organizer Daniel Hunter writes, "When one is watching a disaster unfold, the impulse to check for constant updates is a natural one. We do this out of worry and fear. We do this because we care, and we don't know what else to do....However, the relentless *consumption* of suffering and injustice does not change anyone's material conditions. It may *feel like* we're doing something, but during such moments, we are experiencing an impact rather than having one....Absorbing each blow head-on and then performing our disapproval online is not 'resistance.' Trump is a performer. Becoming a full-time viewer and critic of the Trump Show does not create safety or justice for anyone. It merely drives us mad."

Instead, pick a focus that you care about and feel connected to. Let go of the rest. When the velociraptors are all over, just guard one small section of the fence. Trust that others are defending the rest. Because they are. There are many people guarding the fences. Truly, there are more all the time. So ask yourself kindly and realistically, What can you commit to focusing on? Is there an organization whose resources you will use? Whose calls to action you'd like to answer? Do you have a cherished friend group that you can join forces with? Steady yourself with focus and intention. This way, we create a ""rebellious culture of care."

Suggestion 2: Rewrite the Headlines

Obviously, the Trump administration wants to overwhelm and disorient us. They also want us to cower in fear. As Hayes writes in *Truthout,* "Authoritarian regimes thrive on fear, and fear has been spreading .... We've seen institutions capitulate, leaders go silent, people self-censor, and cultural figures bend the knee." But a lot of what Trump wants to do will not withstand pushback. His success is in no way inevitable, though he certainly wants us to think it is. In fact, many of his actions and intentions have been reversed – often quietly – because he likes to keep his own failures quietly out of sight.

One strategy to gain perspective and strength is to rewrite headlines in your mind. Instead of reading one of the headlines as "Trump does THIS", read it as "Trump wants us to believe he can do THIS." Much of what he has attempted to do has no legal standing. Even if organizations comply, appeals are always possible. Do not get swept up in the tide of saying, "Well, he'll just break the law." Do not accept the outcome. Do not give in to helpless resignation. Do not mentally comply.

Suggestion 3: Spread Courage

I don't think of myself as a courageous person. In fact, I often feel quite the opposite. But courage can take many forms. And it's all around us, wherever people are refusing to be cowed into silence. Think of all the people gathering in public to protest. (Three million to 5 million people, for example, participated in the Hands Off protests nationwide on April 5th.) There are people speaking out at town hall meetings. Inundating their representatives with phone calls. Building sanctuary and solidarity networks. There are schools, universities, and other organizations banding together to speak with a common voice.

One powerful thing we can all do to spread courage is simply to notice it and point it out. We must "actively, effusively" celebrate it. And what a joyful task. Ask yourself: Who in your community is

standing up for democracy, dignity and decency? How can you thank them? How can you celebrate them? How can you join them?"

Wherever you can, reach outside your own circles to tell those guarding other parts of the fence that you're with them in spirit. You could send an email or a handwritten thank you note. You could bring up successes in conversations. You could take inspiration yourself and use it to take action. As Hunter writes, "The best antidote to fear is fellowship. Connect with the people in your life who love you. Feel that connection, and let it touch your fear." Whenever people see one person or organization stand up, it's easier for others to join in. We've seen this already. Sure, fear is contagious. But so is courage.

We're here to spread it today.

Sources:

"If Fear is the Goal, Then Solidarity is the Antidote," by Daniel Hunter. Published in *Waging Nonviolence: People Powered News and Analysis,* April 21, 2025

"Trump Needs Public Cooperation to Enact a Fascist Vision. Here's How We Refuse," by Kelly Hayes. Published in *TruthOut,* January 22, 2025.

Chapter 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE PATHWAYS – A MOMENT OF POSSIBILITY

Daniel Hunter (whose work has been inspiring us a lot lately) writes about four distinct "resistance pathways." Each pathway has its own tactics and priorities, but they're each essential to protecting our collective future. They are:

- Protect people
- Defend civic institutions
- Disrupt and disobey
- Build alternatives

Depending on your priorities and your personality, you may be drawn to one pathway over the others. We're in for a long fight. We hope that finding our pathways will help us each embrace the parts of the fight that lift us up, and let go of the aspects that are more likely to wear us out – recognizing that we are part of an ecosystem of resistance, in which each person brings their unique strengths to the table.

In the next few chapters, we're going to explore each of the four pathways by taking a look at some of the powerful acts of resistance that people are engaged in, right now, to protect our institutions, our people, and our world, and build something better in the process. As you read on, think about which pathways resonate with you, and how you might find your way in.

Pathway 1: PROTECTING PEOPLE

At Cooke Elementary School in DC, ICE agents attempted to detain a school nurse. Staff members intervened, filming the interaction and asking if they had a warrant. ICE gave up and left. Anticipating similar situations, other schools have formed Sanctuary Teams so educators have defined roles if ICE enters the building.

Immigrants rights groups around the country swiftly mobilized to offer "Know Your Rights" trainings – so effectively that Trump border czar Tom Homan complained that these trainings are "making it very difficult" to arrest people.

After a mother and her three child were seized by ICE in the small town of Sacketts Harbor, a thousand protesters went on the march outside of Tom Homan's summer home. The family was released.

Chicago Teachers Union used the momentum of the moment to win a historic contract, intentionally building in protections for their most vulnerable students — affirming sanctuary schools, protecting Black history, defending trans kids, investing in green energy for schools, and giving veteran teachers a raise in the bargain!

Corewell Health, the largest healthcare provider in Michigan, stopped providing gender affirming care for trans youth following a Trump executive order. Following massive protests and backlash, they reversed course.

Pathway 2: DEFENDING CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

In reaction to DOGE purges, AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees) membership skyrockets, reaching highest enrollment in the union's history; the union wins a series of legal victories protecting their members, and continues to fight. The president of the union joked, "I really want to send Trump an organizing award, but I don't know how appropriate that would be."

Huge public backlash forces government organizations to restore information that had been purged from webpages on Harriet Tubman, the Navajo codetalkers, Jackie Robinson, and more.

The Big 10 mutual defense compact emerges to provide universities with pooled funding and legal resources against Trump admin attacks.

After an executive order calls to "restore truth and sanity to American history," the secretary of the Smithsonian holds firm, accurately identifying that the order had no enforcement mechanism, and writing "As always, our work will be shaped by the best scholarship, free of partisanship, to help the American public better understand our nation's history, challenges, and triumphs."

In the face of attacks, new alliances are forming. As of April 29, a massive coalition of unions, nonprofits, and local governments joined in an omnibus lawsuit against the Trump administration in what NPR has called the "broadest legal challenge yet to President Trump's massive overhaul of the federal government."

Pathway 3: DISRUPT AND DISOBEY

After Target drops its DEI programs, Black clergy organize a boycott; foot traffic drops substantially, as does their stock price. Meanwhile, Costco, which maintained their DEI commitments, sees a growth in foot traffic.

1.5 million federal workers refuse to comply with Elon's email demanding that they share 5 things they did that week - protecting sensitive information and exposing fissures in the administration's power. This small act of resistance galvanized workers to hold the line and resist as much as possible.

Fed up with elite law firms giving in to Trump's demands, Georgetown law students create a spreadsheet tracking which firms have caved and which have stood strong. Budding young lawyers start using the spreadsheet to decide which firms deserve their applications.

After the Trump administration sets up anti-trans and anti-DEI tiplines, people quickly flood them with hoaxes and jokes. It's hard to know the impact of this yet, but we do know that during the last administration, similar tactics left "fully upended the system, leaving operators unable to answer more than 98 percent of incoming calls."

Following the Tesla Takedown protests and Elon Musk's growing unpopularity, Tesla profits drop 71%. Questioned on live TV about the company's losses, Musk seems visibly uncomfortable and close to tears.

Pathway 4: BUILDING ALTERNATIVES

Workers in multiple government agencies have created anonymous social media accounts to report the truth about what's happening inside their institutions: AltUSDA, AltUSGS, AltDOI, and more. One such group, the Resistance Rangers, creates an archive called "Rangers Uncensored," to preserve and protect LGBTQ histories that had been removed from the National Park Service website.

Many police interactions that ultimately lead to someone being detained and/or deported start with a traffic stop. Recognizing this, the Democratic Socialists of America organize free brake light repair clinics, to reduce police encounters for vulnerable community members who couldn't otherwise afford the repair.

The Community Immigration Law Center, based in Madison, is one of only two organizations in Wisconsin that represents people who can't afford an attorney in immigration court. They're a grassroots organization – but their goal is to represent EVERYONE in the state who is threatened with deportation. Getting off the ground required a little grit, but they forged a creative alternative path: throwing house parties to raise money for their work – and to this day, you can join them to eat cake and support immigrants' rights.

Chapter 3: Resources

There are so many incredible organizations doing great work. Here is a list of just a few you might find inspiring:

Local and Regional Organizations

ACLU of Wisconsin – One of the Trump regime's main targets, of course, is free speech, protest and dissent. The American Civil Liberties Union stands at the forefront of defending First Amendment rights. The Wisconsin chapter is working on a number of issues, such as immigrant and LGBTQIIA+ rights; police, prisons and criminal law reform; privacy and surveillance; reproductive freedom; and voting rights. Nationally, the ACLU is a central non-profit organization pushing back on Trump administration threats against campus speech. Through lawsuits and media campaigns, it remains a bulwark against government intimidation. You could donate to support their work or join one of their campaigns.

Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council – This statewide nonprofit (run by journalists and advocates) "seeks to safeguard access to information that citizens must have to act responsibly in a free and democratic society." Trump's regime (as well as the WI Republican-led state government) thrives on secrecy and obfuscation. The WI Freedom of Information Council fights for government transparency and press freedom. It has opposed efforts to weaken open-records laws and defends the public's right to know. Thanks to the work of the Council, WI officials faced backlash in recent years when trying to curb public records. This might be a good organization to support, especially right now.

Midwest Environmental Advocates – A Madison-based nonprofit law center, MEA empowers communities to stand up for clean air, water, and land. During the Trump years, as federal environmental enforcement waned, MEA stepped in at the state and local level to enforce the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts despite federal rollbacks. MEA provides legal support to citizen groups. By filing lawsuits, contested-case petitions, and educating the public, MEA helps local residents defend environmental protections when federal policy falls short.

Clean Wisconsin – The state's oldest environmental advocacy organization, Madison's own Clean Wisconsin has aggressively fought Trump administration environmental rollbacks. Clean Wisconsin uses litigation and research to protect Wisconsin's land, air and water. The organization has had tangible victories (such as court rulings forcing stricter air standards), and demonstrates that work at the state level can effectively resist the weakening of federal environmental protections.

Voces de la Frontera – Headquartered in Milwaukee, Voces de la Frontera is a leading immigrant-rights organization, fiercely resisting the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies. It is arguably the most powerful advocacy group in the state for protecting immigrants and refugees. It organized the state-wide "Day without Immigrants and Workers" on May 1st and 2nd, 2025. It has spearheaded the efforts to support Judge Hannah Dugan after her arrest for protecting the rights of an undocumented immigrant in her courtroom. Voces has launched campaigns to keep ICE out of schools and courthouses, fought for driver's licenses for undocumented residents, and has led many "Know Your Rights" trainings. Voces provides direct support to vulnerable families and also pressures local officials to adopt sanctuary policies.

Community Immigration Law Center – Madison's CILC is a volunteer-driven legal aid network ensuring that low-income immigrants have access to attorneys. Formed as a response to the cruelty of Trump's deportation tactics, CILC set up a kind of "public defender" system for immigrants in Dane County. Local attorneys raise funds through parties (sometimes including cake!) and donations to take on deportation cases *pro bono*. The model has been so inspiring that it's drawn attention as a potential blueprint for other communities to emulate in providing immigrant legal defense.

Fair Wisconsin - Founded in 1994, Fair Wisconsin is a local group aimed at advancing, achieving and protecting equality and liberation for LGBTQ+ people and the civil rights of all Wisconsinites. Fair Wisconsin's work includes lobbying, legislative advocacy, grassroots organization, and coalition building. Fair Wisconsin has launched a PAC and non-profit group, and has built successful coalitions with many progressive allies and partner organizations, giving it extraordinary breadth and depth.

Wisconsin Abortion Fund - Wisconsin Abortion Fund provides financial, logistical, and emotional support to people seeking abortion care. A donation to the organization helps cover up to the full cost of an abortion procedure. WAF partners with the Chicago Abortion Fund and Our Justice to cover the cost of travel, lodging and childcare needed for those seeking an abortion. (We figured you were all well aware of the important work of Planned Parenthood, WI as well.)

Freedom, Inc. - Madison-based Freedom, Inc. is a Black and Southeast Asian non-profit organization that works with low- to no-income communities of color. The group's mission is "to achieve social justice through coupling direct services with leadership development and community organizing that will bring about social, political, cultural, and economic change resulting in the end of

violence against women, gender-non-conforming and transgender folks, and children within communities of color."

Quick and Easy Political Action

5 Calls - The 5 Calls app reduces some of the friction and inertia that gets in the way of contacting your representatives. The organization "researches issues, writes scripts that clearly articulate a progressive position, figure out the most influential decision-makers, and collect phone numbers for their offices" You simply call. The idea is to make 5 calls a day, or on the regular. The 5 Calls founders make a compelling case that calling your Congresspeople is the most effective and, at least with the app, easiest way to influence policy. You can choose an emerging issue, read their background and script, and contact your representative before they have come out with a public stance. Expressing your view early on makes it much more likely that you will influence the representative's platform, because they are unlikely to change their view once they have gone public.

Chop Wood, Carry Wisconsin - Chop Wood, Carry Wisconsin is a substack – "an action newsletter for anyone who wants to pass progressive policy and lay the groundwork to elect future Democrats in Wisconsin."

Swing Left - A very strategic and practical organization that helps people to make the best decisions about how to spend limited time, effort, and resources to help Democrats win nationally. Their website shows the seats that are needed to flip the House in 2026 ("3 to win!") and tells you ways you can get involved and support their work. The site is fun to look at, very informative and strategic, and inspiring.

Quick Inspiration

Resist List - Instead of bumming yourself out doomscrolling, you can "hope scroll" on the Resist List. The list offers continually updated stories of people's non-cooperation with the Trump regime. You can also jump to the bottom, past the stories, and visit their ever-growing "databases of non-cooperation" and "trackers of litigation and impact." This includes 1) reports about "movement activity against the coup" by researcher Jeremy Pressman; 2) a resistance database by the Horizons Project listed by person or interest group (such as federal workers, unions, school districts, and even Pope Francis – up to his very last days); and 3) the CCC Data Dashboard, an academic project offering weekly snapshots of rallies and public demonstrations.

Daily Dose of Climate Hope - Because "action is the antidote to despair," this substack gives you "one easy action to take every weekday, along with stories about the trends, innovations, and people creating a better world. Every Sunday there is a "good news roundup" as well.

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